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Response to Office Action Dated 1/9/2004

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

This communication contains claim amendments in response to the Final Office Action mailed January 9, 2004.

Claims 1-18 are pending.

New claims 19-28 have been added.

Claims 1-5, 11-15, and 17 have been amended.

Accordingly, claims 1-28 are pending in the application.

CLAIM LISTING

Please consider the following amendments to the claims of the present application as set forth below. In accordance with the PTO's revised amendment format, changes are shown by strikethrough (for deleted matter) or underlining (for added matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A method for using a computer to solve problems involving a plurality of agents, comprising:

receiving ~~by said~~ at the computer a request from one of the agents to participate in a ~~new or existing~~ problem-solving group;

submitting an update from the computer to a database to be stored in the a database ~~storing~~, the update includes information about agents; that include contingent commitments between different ones of the agents, and rules for processing said contingent commitments to discover potential solutions, wherein the contingent commitments include at least one modal operator or quantifier;

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1 sending an update notification from the computer to those agents in the
2 problem-solving group according to agent-definable criteria, said update
3 notification is in response to the update, wherein the update notification comprises
4 comprising:

5 an indication that a new agent has joined the problem-solving group;
6 a description of solutions, ~~if any,~~ that are discovered by processing of the
7 contingent commitments according to the rules of the database, with an indication
8 of a solution type, for each such solution;

9 said information about ~~said~~ the agent; and information about one or more
10 contingent commitments of said agent.

11
12 2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the information
13 about the said agent is ~~controlled by~~ submitted to the database, the agent includes
14 privacy filters that can be removed only by said agent.

15
16 3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the information
17 about the one or more contingent commitments of said agent is controlled by
18 privacy filters that can be removed only by said agent.

19
20 4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said ~~solutions may~~
21 ~~be of the following types:~~ solution types may be binding, non-binding, subject to
22 vote, or subject to future contingencies.

23
24 5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said request
25 includes at least one contingent commitment relating to the problem to be solved.

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1
2 6. The method of claim 1 wherein one of said solutions may be converted
3 into a binding agreement among the agents or a subset of the agents.
4

5 7. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
6 receiving an identifier specifying form of payment and account information
7 to be used in providing payments related to problem solving group participation
8 and/or transactions arising from solutions.
9

10 8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the form of payment includes
11 at least one of the following: credit card, debit card, Paypal.TM., c2it.TM.,
12 checking account transfer, or other electronic funds transfer.
13

14 9. (Original) The method of claim 7 further comprising:
15 receiving an express authorization to charge said account for said problem
16 solving group participation.
17

18 10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein said express authorization is
19 received from one of the following: a credit card issuer, a debit card issuer, a bank,
20 or other electronic funds transfer system sponsor.
21

22 11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said problem
23 includes at least one from the group of:
24 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning the price of a
25 collection of goods and/or services;

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1 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning a non-price scalar
2 value, ~~other than price~~ ;

3 a negotiation relating to a collection of goods and/or services;

4 a negotiation among a plurality of parties relating to venture capital
5 investing;

6 a negotiation among a plurality of parties relating to a joint venture
7 undertaking;

8 a negotiation among a plurality of parties relating to the development of
9 intellectual property;

10 a negotiation among a plurality of parties relating to internal corporate
11 strategic planning;

12 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning the scheduling of one
13 or more meetings, events, or processes;

14 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning the early adoption of
15 new products and/or services;

16 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning terms of settlement of
17 a legal dispute;

18 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning disposition of funds
19 for charitable purposes;

20 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning conduct of central
21 bank policy;

22 a negotiation among a plurality of parties concerning governmental or inter-
23 governmental policy-making; and

24 a negotiation among a plurality of parties relating to group activities.
25

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1 12. (Currently Amended) A system for processing contingent
2 commitments, comprising:

3 a means for receiving a request to for a plurality of agents to participate in a
4 new or existing problem-solving group;

5 a means for submitting an update to a database storing information about at
6 least one of the agents, contingent commitments, and rules for processing
7 information within the database pertaining to said contingent commitments to
8 discover potential solutions, wherein the contingent commitments include at least
9 one modal operator or quantifier;

10 a means for sending an update notification to the at least one agent that is a
11 part of agents in a problem-solving group according to agent-definable criteria,
12 said update notification comprising:

13 an indication that a new agent has joined the problem-solving group;

14 a description of solutions, if any, discovered by processing of the
15 contingent commitments according to the rules of the database, with an indication
16 of solution type, for each such solution; and

17 information about said agent; and information about said agent's contingent
18 commitments.

19
20 13. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~improving the accuracy of~~
21 providing a valuation estimate, the valuation estimate pertaining to one or more
22 quantities assets and/or liabilities, said method comprising:

23 performing one or more calculations at the request of one or more agents to
24 estimate ~~the~~ a value of a the quantity, said calculations comprising:

25 ~~said agents~~ selecting one or more models;

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1 ~~said agents deciding on model weighting factors for each of the models to~~
2 ~~be used for valuation;~~

3 ~~said agents selecting one or more sets of inputs;~~

4 ~~said agents deciding on input weighting factors for each of the sets of~~
5 ~~inputs used by each model;~~

6 ~~said agents selecting one or more entities; said agents deciding on entity~~
7 ~~weighting factors for each of the entities for which the valuation is performed;~~

8 ~~said agents performing one or more calculations using said models, said~~
9 ~~model weighting factors, said input sets, said input set weighting factors, and said~~
10 ~~entities, and said entity weighting factors, wherein the calculations provide a~~
11 multi-dimensional error reduction;

12 ~~said agents calculating weighted averages for each of across said models,~~
13 ~~said input sets, and said entities, using said model weighting factors, said input set~~
14 ~~weighting factors, and said entity weighting factors to accomplish the multi-~~
15 dimensional error reduction; and

16 ~~calculating the median, mean, mode, and standard deviation of statistical~~
17 information relating to said input models, said input sets, and said entities
18 ~~weighted~~ averages.

19
20 14. (Currently Amended) A method for using a computer to conduct
21 a negotiation between a first agent and a second agent, the two agents, said
22 negotiation comprising:

23 receiving by said computer a request from an agent a first agent to negotiate
24 with a second agent another agent, wherein the subject of said negotiation is a
25 scalar quantity;

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1 notifying ~~an~~ the first agent by said computer of an opportunity to negotiate
2 with the second ~~another~~ agent;

3 receiving by said computer data related to a negotiation between the first
4 agent and the second agent ~~two agents~~;

5 performing a calculation to determine whether the negotiation produces a
6 value acceptable to the first agent and the second agent ~~said agents~~;

7 notifying the first agent and the second agent ~~said agents~~ of the outcome of
8 ~~a the negotiation; facilitating real time communication between agents before,~~
9 ~~during, and after the negotiation session.~~

10
11 15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the scalar
12 quantity is associated with a collection of goods, services, or other assets and/or
13 liabilities, ~~whether~~ wherein the assets can be either tangible or intangible.

14
15 16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein one of said agents is a
16 buyer and a second of said agents is a seller.

17
18 17. (Currently Amended) A method for using a computer to manage
19 commitments and make safe disclosures, comprising:

20 receiving ~~by said~~ at the computer a request from one of a plurality of agents
21 to participate in a ~~new or existing~~ problem solving group with the computer;

22 submitting an update from the computer to a database storing to store
23 information about agents, contingent commitments, and rules for processing said
24 commitments to discover potential solutions between different ones of the agents,
25

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1 wherein the contingent commitments include at least one modal operator or
2 quantifier;

3 sending an update notification from the computer to the agents in the
4 problem-solving group according to agent-definable criteria, said update
5 notification is in response to the update, wherein the update notification comprises
6 comprising:

7 an indication that a new agent has joined the problem-solving group;

8 a description of solutions, if any, discovered by processing of the
9 contingent commitments according to the rules of the database, with an indication
10 of a solution type, for each such solution;

11 information about said agent; and

12 information about one or more contingent commitments of said agent;

13 performing one or more calculations at the request of one or more agents to
14 estimate the value of a quantity, said calculations comprising

15 ~~said agents~~ selecting one or more models;

16 ~~said agents~~ deciding on model weighting factors for each of the models to
17 be used for valuation;

18 ~~said agents~~ selecting one or more sets of inputs;

19 ~~said agents deciding on~~ determining at least one input weighting factors
20 factor for each of the sets of inputs used by each model;

21 ~~said agents~~ selecting one or more entities; said agents deciding on entity
22 weighting factors for each of the entities for which the valuation is performed;

23 ~~said agents~~ performing one or more calculations using said models, said
24 model weighting factors, said input sets, said input set weighting factors, said
25 entities, and said entity weighting factors;

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1 ~~said agents~~ calculating weighted averages for each of ~~aeress~~ said models,
2 said input sets,

3 and said entities, using said model weighting factors, said input set
4 weighting factors, and said entity weighting factors; and

5 calculating the median, mean, mode, and standard deviation of said
6 weighted averages;

7 conducting a negotiation between two agents, wherein the subject of the
8 negotiation pertains to a scalar quantity, said negotiation comprising:

9 receiving by said computer a request from an agent to negotiate with
10 another agent;

11 notifying an agent by said computer of an opportunity to negotiate with
12 another agent,

13 receiving by said computer data related to a negotiation between two
14 agents;

15 performing a calculation to determine whether the negotiation produces a
16 value acceptable to said agents; notifying said agents of the outcome of a
17 negotiation; and facilitating real-time communication between agents before,
18 during, and after the negotiation session.

19
20 18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said calculations are
21 facilitated by one or more computers.

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1 Please add the following new claims:

2
3 19. (New) A method comprising:

4 a) maintaining a database for managing contingent commitments by
5 maintaining a database storing information, the information pertaining to existing
6 agents, contingent commitments, and rules for processing said commitments to
7 discover potential solutions, wherein the contingent commitments include at least
8 one modal operator or quantifier;

9 b) providing a valuation estimate, the valuation estimate providing an
10 estimate as to one or more quantities by performing one or more calculations at the
11 request of one or more agents to estimate the value of a quantity, wherein the
12 estimate accomplishes multi-dimensional error reduction; and

13 c) conducting a negotiation between two agents, said negotiation
14 comprising receiving by said computer a request from an agent to negotiate with
15 another agent, notifying an agent by said computer of an opportunity to negotiate
16 with another agent, receiving by the computer data related to a negotiation
17 between two agents, performing a calculation to determine whether the negotiation
18 produces a value acceptable to said agents; and notifying said agents of the
19 outcome of a negotiation, wherein the subject of said negotiation is a scalar
20 quantity.

21
22 20. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein said agents perform the
23 calculations using said models, model weighting factors, said input sets, input set
24 weighting factors, said entities, and entity weighting factors;

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1 and wherein calculating weighted averages for each of said models, said
2 input sets, and said entities, respectively using said model weighting factors, said
3 input set weighting factors, and said entity weighting factors satisfy the multi-
4 dimensional error reduction.

5
6 21. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the quantities include assets
7 and liabilities.

8
9 22. (New) Computer readable media having computer readable instructions
10 that when executed by a processor causes the processor to perform a method for
11 conducting a negotiation between two agents or groups of agents includes
12 information that is maintained confidential to each agent from the other agent, said
13 negotiation comprising receiving at said computer a request from an agent to
14 negotiate with another agent, receiving at the computer data related to a
15 negotiation values that describes acceptable values between two agents,
16 performing a calculation to determine whether the negotiation produces a value
17 acceptable to said agents; and notifying said agents of the outcome of a
18 negotiation, wherein the subject of said negotiation is a scalar quantity.

19
20 23. (New) The method contained on the computer readable media of claim
21 22, further comprising allowing both parties to safely disclose their true
22 negotiation strategy.

23
24 24. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the statistical information
25 includes median information.

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1
2 25. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the statistical information
3 includes mean information.

4
5 26. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the statistical information
6 includes mode information.

7
8 27. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the statistical information
9 includes standard deviation information.

10
11 28. (New) The method of claim 14, further comprising facilitating real-
12 time communication between the first agent and the second agent before, during,
13 and after the negotiation session.